

Small businesses are the driver of our communities, and now, more than ever, it is imperative for Congress to support them.

In my home State of Florida, there are over 2.5 million small businesses employing over 3.5 million Floridians.

As a former small business owner myself and as someone who will be a small business owner again very, very soon, I understand the sacrifice many small business owners make to keep their doors open and to meet their payrolls. I know the challenges that they face and the grit that it takes for them to persevere and the impact that they have on our communities.

Among these challenges for many small businesses is acquiring the capital that is necessary to finance their operations.

Many of the tools available at the SBA strive to increase access to capital for small businesses that are unable to receive it through conventional and traditional lending markets. One of these tools to support small businesses is the SBA's Community Advantage Loan Program, which was launched as a pilot program to assist small businesses in historically underserved and rural areas. It targets assistance to veteran-owned businesses, women-owned businesses, startups, and underserved minority communities, all key job creators. The combination of financial and technical assistance has made the program a proven game changer for many small businesses.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from California (Ms. JUDY CHU) for her bipartisan leadership in providing strategic improvements to this program and to move it from a pilot program to an authorized program for the next 5 years.

The improvements included in H.R. 7903 will ensure the program serves businesses truly in need of SBA services. Specifically, H.R. 7903 defines the program with congressional intent. It outlines how Community Advantage lenders must operate within the program and details loan terms and other requirements.

Mr. Speaker, I also thank the chairwoman and the ranking member for advancing this important legislation that will strengthen and improve the Community Advantage Loan Program.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, this is a good bill that deserves our support. The SBA's Community Advantage program provides both financial and technical assistance to our Nation's smallest firms. It is a great program that has proven results.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, in almost a decade, Community Advantage lenders have delivered over \$770 million in affordable capital to underserved small businesses across America, assisting women- and minority-owned businesses that have historically struggled to secure affordable capital through traditional means, yet new lenders are hesitant to participate because of its pilot status and frequently changing rules.

Today's bill will remedy these problems and ultimately grow the CA program to deliver more capital to entrepreneurs who need access to affordable capital the most, especially those severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud the work by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. JUDY CHU) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SPANO) for their efforts in crafting a bipartisan bill to codify the Community Advantage program.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all my colleagues to vote "yes," and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 7903, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 6395, WILLIAM M. (MAC) THORNBERRY NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR 2021

Ms. KENDRA S. HORN of Oklahoma submitted the following conference report and statement on the bill (H.R. 6395) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2021 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

(For conference report and statement, see proceedings of the House of December 3, 2020, published in Book II.)

MAKING IN ORDER AT ANY TIME CONSIDERATION OF CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 6395, WILLIAM M. (MAC) THORNBERRY NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR 2021

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that it be in order

at any time to consider a conference report to accompany H.R. 6395; that all points of order against the conference report and against its consideration be waived; that the conference report be considered as read; and that the previous question be considered as ordered on the conference report to its adoption without intervening motion except: one, 1 hour of debate; and, two, one motion to recommit if applicable.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Massachusetts?

There was no objection.

504 MODERNIZATION AND SMALL MANUFACTURER ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2020

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 8211) to amend the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 to improve the loan guaranty program, enhance the ability of small manufacturers to access affordable capital, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 8211

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "504 Modernization and Small Manufacturer Enhancement Act of 2020".

SEC. 2. ADDITIONS TO POLICY GOALS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT COMPANY PROGRAM.

Section 501(d)(3) of the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 (15 U.S.C. 695(d)(3)) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subparagraphs (A) through (L) as subparagraphs (B) through (M), respectively;

(2) by inserting before subparagraph (B) (as so redesignated) the following:

"(A) workforce development through work-based or work-integrated training, which shall be satisfied by demonstrating that a small business concern that is a subject of the project has—

"(i) a documented in-house training program, the duration of which is not shorter than 12 weeks; or

"(ii) entered into a contract with an entity—

"(I) to provide trained applicants for any open position of employment at the small business concern; and

"(II) that ensures that any applicant provided to the small business concern under subclause (I) has undergone not fewer than 12 weeks of training that is relevant to the open position described in that subclause,";

(3) by amending subparagraph (D) (as so redesignated) to read as follows:

"(D) expansion of minority-owned, employee-owned, or women-owned business development,";